

II. REMARKS

A. Rule 131 Declarations Of Prior Invention, and Rule 132 Declarations of Attribution

US publication 2003/0219564 (Hubbard) forms the bases for all claim rejections in the current office action. The effective date of this reference is May 22, 2002, the filing date of the corresponding US patent application.

In response to the current office action, submitted herewith is:

- DECLARATION OF PRIOR INVENTION IN THE UNITED STATES OR IN A NAFTA OR WTO MEMBER COUNTRY TO OVERCOME CITED PATENT OR PUBLICATION (37 C.F.R. 1.131) by co-inventor Kurt J. Fago, and Exhibits A-C attached thereto; and

- DECLARATION OF PRIOR INVENTION IN THE UNITED STATES OR IN A NAFTA OR WTO MEMBER COUNTRY TO OVERCOME CITED PATENT OR PUBLICATION (37 C.F.R. 1.131) by co-inventor Paul Raymond Rust, and Exhibits A-H attached thereto.

These Declarations establish conception and actual reduction to practice in the United States of the invention disclosed and claimed in the application prior to May 22, 2002, which is the effective date of the reference publication US 2003/0219564 (Hubbard).

In further response to the current office action, also submitted herewith is:

- RULE 132 DECLARATION (37 C.F.R. 1.132) by co-inventor Kurt J. Fago, and Exhibit A attached thereto; and

- RULE 132 DECLARATION (37 C.F.R. 1.132) by co-inventor Paul Raymond Rust, and Exhibit A attached thereto.

These Declarations establish attribution of the reference document cited by the examiner in the Notice of References Cited, accompanying the Office Action dated 02/28/2006, line "U", identified as "Mule-Hide Products, What's New News Release, Mule-Hide Introduces Self-Bridging Mate-Line, 11/01/2001, www.mulehide.com/news5.html," to the inventors as disclosing their invention which is the subject of the current Application.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that rejection of the claims should be withdrawn, and such action is respectfully requested.

B. Response to Amendment

In view of the Declarations by both inventors and exhibits attached thereto accompanying this Reply, it is believed that the evidence is now sufficient to establish a reduction to practice in a NAFTA or WTO member country prior to the applied reference.

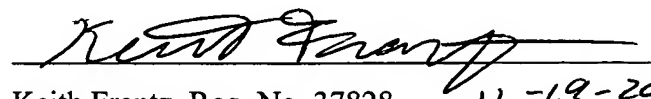
C. Claim Rejections

In view of the Declarations and exhibits attached thereto accompanying this Reply, it is believed that further reply to the claims rejections presented is not required under the rules. However, should the Declaration be found to be insufficient or ineffective to overcome the reference, the previously submitted reply is incorporated herein, and the right to further reply is reserved.

D. Summary

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Keith Frantz", is written over a horizontal line.

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